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**For Immediate Release**

**FCC LAUNCHES INQUIRY INTO ROLE OF BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY FOR IMPROVING MATERNAL HEALTH**

***Notice of Inquiry to Explore How FCC's Broadband Health Mapping Tool Can Be Expanded and Enhanced to Address Maternal Health Crisis in U.S.***

WASHINGTON, October 19, 2023—The Federal Communications Commission today voted to launch a proceeding designed to explore ways the Commission's [Mapping Broadband Health in America platform](#) could be expanded and enhanced to help better leverage digital health tools to improve maternal care.

The United States is the only developed country with increasing maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity rates, and research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests that more than 80 percent of these deaths and complications are preventable. Additional research further demonstrates that access to broadband and the connection to healthcare that Internet service enables can help address the crisis. Meanwhile, access to maternal health care remains a major challenge, especially for women of color, women living in rural areas, and women from lower income households. In June 2023, the Commission updated the *Mapping Broadband Health in America* platform to reflect certain maternal health data required under the Data Mapping to Save Moms' Lives Act.

Through this inquiry, the Commission seeks comment on issues that will help guide the next phase of this mapping platform and inform associated data analytics work concerning the relationship between broadband and maternal health. This would include future plans to incorporate additional maternal health variables, other relevant data, and functionalities; to assess how best to address data limitations while still protecting privacy and confidentiality; and to ensure that future updates result in improved user experience and actionable insights.

In addition, this proceeding will also seek information and comment on current uses of broadband-enabled health technologies, solutions, and services that are available and being used in maternal health care, as well as the range of barriers that prevent access and utilization by childbearing women or women receiving postpartum care. Lastly, it will seek comment on potential actions or activities the Commission could pursue to help improve maternal health outcomes; to reduce maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity rates; and to promote maternal health equity.

Action by the Commission October 19, 2023 by Notice of Inquiry (FCC 23-85). Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, Simington, and Gomez approving. Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, and Gomez issuing separate statements.

GN Docket No. 23-309

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*This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).*